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NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
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COMBINED TASK FORCE PROVIDE COMFORT:
A NEW MODEL FOR "LEAD NATION" COMMAND?

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: 

16 May 1994

Paper directed by
Captain D. Watson, United States Navy
Chairman, Department of Joint Military Operations



DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 1

5081 94-25902



94 8 16 08 6

UNCLASSIFIED

Security Classification This Page

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1. Report Security Classification: UNCLASSIFIED			
2. Security Classification Authority:			
3. Declassification/Downgrading Schedule:			
4. Distribution/Availability of Report: DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE; DISTRIBUTION IS UNLIMITED.			
5. Name of Performing Organization: Joint Military Operations Department			
6. Office Symbol: 1C		7. Address: Naval War College, 686 Cushing Rd., Newport, RI 02841-5010	
8. Title (UNCLASSIFIED): COMBINED TASK FORCE PROVIDE COMFORT: A NEW MODEL FOR "LEAD NATION" COMMAND?			
9. Personal Authors: Weber, Bruce Allan			
10. Type of Report: Final		11. Date of Report: 94 May 16	
12. Page Count: 49 (i-iv, 1-45)			
13. Supplementary Notation: A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Joint Military Operations Department. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.			
14. Ten key words that relate to your paper: PROVIDE COMFORT, COMBINED OPERATIONS, COALITIONS, ALLIANCES, HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION, JOINT TASK FORCES, COMBINED TASK FORCES			
15. Abstract: Operation Provide Comfort, perhaps the most challenging humanitarian relief effort ever, commenced in April 1991, six weeks after the end of Desert Storm. At the conclusion of its first phase three months later, 23,000 personnel, 30 nations, and 50 relief agencies had demonstrated the potential power of an effective coalition. Combined Task Force (CTF) Provide Comfort established a new standard of excellence in coalition command structure and command relationships. Unique in several aspects of lead nation command, the CTF organizational framework most notably differed from doctrinal models in its task-force orientation of five functional component commands and its effective employment of tactical control (TACON). A detailed analysis of the leadership aspects of Provide Comfort leads to a proposal for a new model for lead nation command of coalition operations.			
16. Distribution/Availability of Abstract:	Unclassified	Same As Rpt	DTIC Users
18. Abstract Security Classification: <i>Unclassified</i>			
19. Name of Responsible Individual: Chairman, Joint Military Operations Department			
20. Telephone: (401) 841-3414/4120		21. Office Symbol: 1C	

Security Classification of This Page: **UNCLASSIFIED**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
ABSTRACT	ii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	iv
I INTRODUCTION	1
II OPERATIONAL OVERVIEW	5
The Emerging Crisis	5
Planning Considerations	7
Conceptual Approach	10
Task Force Organization	14
Historical Summary	19
III ANALYSIS	24
Methodology	24
Detailed Study--Command Structure/ Command Relationships	24
Specific Facts	24
Corresponding Doctrine	25
Operational Assessment	29
Summary of Findings	33
IV CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	34
Conclusions	34
Recommendations	35
APPENDIX I--PROVIDE COMFORT CHRONOLOGY	38
II--U.S. MILITARY PARTICIPATION	39
III--COALITION PARTICIPATION	40
IV--PUBLISHED MODELS (COMBINED COMMAND)	41
BIBLIOGRAPHY	43

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURE		PAGE
1.	Kurdish Refugees	6
2.	Area of Operation	8
3.	PROVIDE COMFORT Organization	16
4.	Proposed Model: Lead Nation Command Structure, Coalition	36
5.	PROVIDE COMFORT Chronology	38
6.	U.S. Military Participation--By Service	39
7.	U.S. Military Participation--Within Components	39
8.	Coalition Partners Participation	40
9.	PROVIDE COMFORT [Coalition Forces]	40
10.	Lead Nation Command Structure in Alliance	41
11.	Theater Coalition C2 Structures: Unilateral Structure	42

COMBINED TASK FORCE PROVIDE COMFORT:
A NEW MODEL FOR "LEAD NATION" COMMAND?

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Operation Provide Comfort, often termed the most challenging humanitarian relief effort ever, commenced in April 1991 only six weeks after Desert Storm combat operations had ended. In the same region of the recent war, the operation at its peak involved 23,000 personnel, participation by 30 nations, and the relief efforts of 50 international agencies. By May 1994, it had continued throughout several stages-- Provide Comfort "Residual", Provide Comfort II, and Provide Comfort III--and to this day remains based at Incirlik AB (Air Base), Turkey. CTF Provide Comfort now focuses on airborne security enforcement operations, typically employing over 70 aircraft and 1,800 personnel in recent months.¹

Provide Comfort I, which U.S. EUCOM (U.S. European Command) terminated when most ground troops had redeployed in September 1991,² was enormously successful. When Iraqi Kurds fled to the mountains of their northern border, a large coalition had formed quickly, adapted methodically to changing

¹ John G. Roos, "Joint Task Forces: Mix 'n' Match Solutions to Crisis Response," Armed Forces Journal International, January 1993, p. 38.

² U.S. European Command, USCINCEUR After Action Report on Operation PROVIDE COMFORT (APO NY: 1992), cover letter.

circumstances, and executed demanding operations few participants had experienced--all within three months. What today seems most extraordinary about Provide Comfort is that it dealt with an often problematic issue, the very decision of whether or not to intervene in a humanitarian conflict, with a sense of direction rarely matched even in less critical humanitarian scenarios in the mid-1990's. "Provide Comfort prevented that potential problem by securing international legitimacy--many nations, numerous private and international organizations, and the U.N. volunteered to participate or blessed the humanitarian effort."³ To cite a term pivotal to the success of any coalition, the leaders of Provide Comfort achieved "unity".

"Unity"--"unity of effort", "unity of command", "unity of resources"--are principles important to effective action in combined operations or leadership in a coalition or alliance. Overarching these and other inter-related areas, fundamental command structure and command relationships are perhaps the two factors which most affect every member of a combined force and determine the outcome of a combined operation. Not surprisingly in consideration of its acknowledged success, Combined Task Force Provide Comfort established new standards of excellence in most leadership categories and, in fact, broke new ground in interesting variations of accepted

³ Joint Unit Lessons Learned Reports (JULLS), Report no. 42431-73012, U.N. Sponsorship of Humanitarian Intervention (USEUCOM: 1991).

combined task force (CTF) organization.

Lieutenant General (LG) John M. Shalikashvili, USA, the CTF commander, created a sound foundation for new doctrine in the command structure of combined operations. Varying techniques published in manuals concentrating on long-standing alliances, he adapted historical coalition precepts to the unique circumstances of northern Iraq. His success warrants study and encourages changes to even recent Field Manuals (FM 100-5, 1993), which have sanctioned a largely *ad hoc* approach to combined contingency operations.⁴ Indeed drafts for FM 100-7 (Decisive Force: The Army in Theater Operations) and FM 100-8 (Combined Army Operations) reflect a trend toward new thought.

The focus of this monograph will be a thorough analysis of the command structure and command relationships of Provide Comfort. The analysis will begin with an operational overview of the combined operation, including the planning considerations, conceptual framework, and missions upon which the task force organization was based. The scope of the study will include all of Provide Comfort I and the initial months of Provide Comfort II in order to demonstrate changes in CTF organization which accompanied later stages of the operation. The core of this analysis will be an assessment of Provide Comfort as measured by published models of command in combined

⁴ U.S. Dept. of the Army, Field Manual 100-5: Operations (Washington: 1993), p. 5-1.

operations. The methodology will consider established doctrine and, where joint publications lack clear guidance, the works of leaders with experience in coalition operations. In the final paragraphs, the analysis will propose a model for "lead nation" combined command reflective of the lessons of Provide Comfort.

CHAPTER II

OPERATIONAL OVERVIEW

The Emerging Crisis

On March 7, 1991, Kurdish resistance forces in northern Iraq initiated a rebellion against the Iraqi Ba'thist regime in a continuation of their pursuit of autonomous rule. President Bush, during Desert Storm, had endorsed clandestine CIA radio transmissions to spark the rebellion "by calling on the Iraqi people to overthrow Saddam Hussein, [but] the administration did not anticipate the uprising either in northern or southern Iraq."¹ Whereas the Kurds most likely expected instantaneous U.S. support to reinforce the CIA broadcasts,² the United States was unprepared for this immediate aftermath of the war. Saddam engaged the Kurdish rebellion with armed vehicles and helos and, on 28 March, the Kurds ran to the Turkish and Iranian borders. They ceased active resistance by 3 April.³

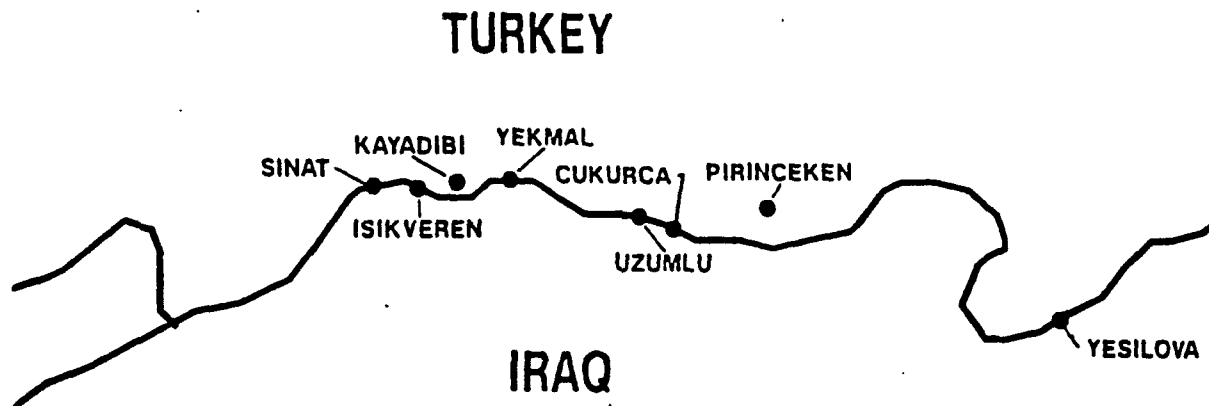
¹ U.S. Congress, Senate, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Civil War in Iraq, Hearings (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1991), Summary of Key Findings, p. VII.

² Stephen C. Pelletiere, The Kurds and Their Agas: An Assessment of the Situation in Northern Iraq (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College. Strategic Studies Institute, 1991), pp. 20-21.

³ John M. Shalikashvili, "Statement," U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Armed Services, Aspects of Anti-Chaos Aid to the Soviet Union, Hearings (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1991), p. 4.

FIGURE 1

KURDISH REFUGEES



- 43 SEPARATE LOCATIONS
- 8 MAJOR CAMP SITES

Source: John M. Shalikashvili, "Statement," U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Armed Services, Aspects of Anti-Chaos Aid to the Soviet Union, Hearings (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print Off., 1991), p.7.

The assessment of the results of the Kurdish drive to the north was an estimated 360,000-760,000 civilians in the rugged, mountainous terrain in a 30-kilometer zone along the Turkish border. The weather at the 206-mile border was bitterly cold and particularly harsh in the 8,000-foot mountains, making matters worse for a half million people with little water, food, shelter, and medical care. The Kurds were observed in 43 different areas, but concentrated in 8 major camp

locations.⁴

U.N. Security Council Resolution 688 of April 5, 1991 insisted "that Iraq allow immediate access by international humanitarian organizations to all those in need of assistance in all parts of Iraq and . . . make available all necessary facilities for their operations;" appealing "to all Member States and to all humanitarian organizations to contribute to these humanitarian relief efforts. . . ." ⁵ As President Bush directed that "a major new effort be undertaken to assist Iraqi refugees," ⁶ EUCOM issued an order to deploy. Deployments for Operation Provide Comfort commenced 6 April and, by 7 April, 27 tons of airdrops had taken place.⁷ The rapidly expanding operation grew to become centered at Incirlik AB, Turkey as the Turkish Foreign Minister, in an 8 April joint statement with U.S. Secretary of State Baker, appealed "to the world to join in efforts to ensure the safe return of the Iraqi people amassed on our borders to their home towns without fearing further repression by Saddam Hussein."⁸

Planning Considerations

Area of Operation. Incirlik AB, Turkey was a logical

⁴ Ibid., p. 6.

⁵ "Feature: Middle East Policy After the Gulf War," Foreign Policy Bulletin, May/June 1991, p. 17.

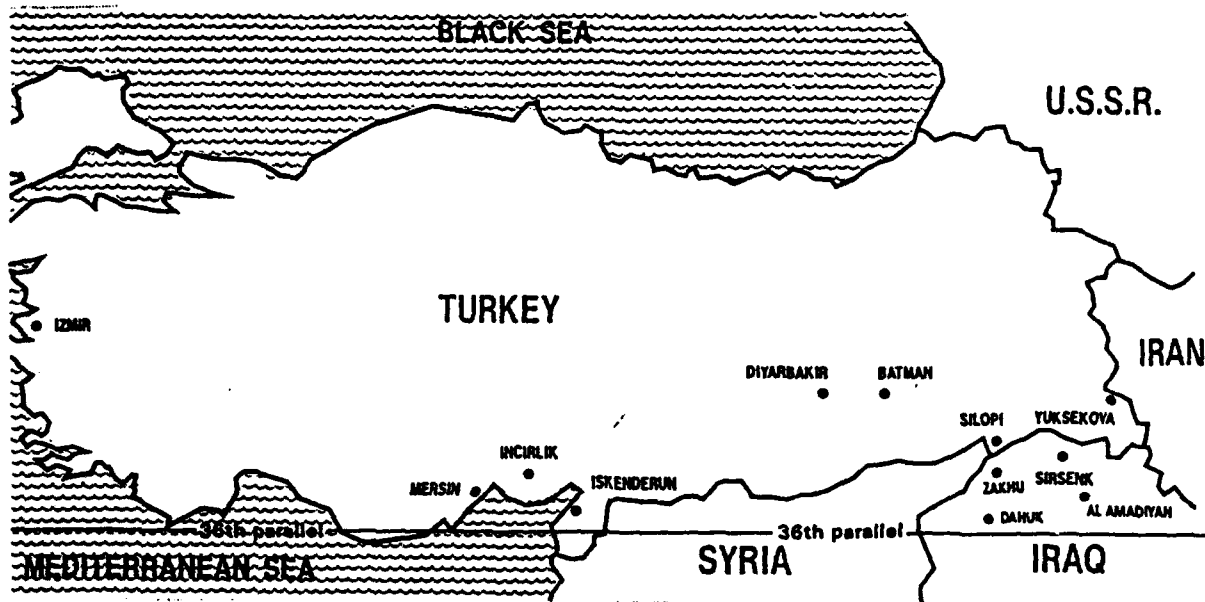
⁶ Ibid., p. 18.

⁷ Shalikashvili, pp. 4, 20-21.

⁸ "Feature: Middle East Policy After the Gulf War," p. 18.

FIGURE 2

AREA OF OPERATION



Source: James L. Jones, "Operation PROVIDE COMFORT: Humanitarian and Security Assistance in Northern Iraq," Marine Corps Gazette, November 1991, p. 98.

point of origin for humanitarian intervention in northern Iraq. A large military air base, it had hosted the operations of CTF Proven Force throughout Desert Storm. Elaborate procedures for flights originating in southwest Turkey were already in place, and aircraft from Incirlik could land at Diyarbakir, a fully operational Turkish airfield, and Batman, an unimproved airfield employed largely by helos.⁹ The potential ultimately existed to operate at an additional air

⁹ Shalikashvili, p. 5.

facility in Zakhu, Iraq if combat damage at the airfield could be repaired. Silopi, Turkey, immediately north of the Iraqi border, was a prime central location from which to distribute food and clothing to the Kurdish population. Accessible by overland transportation, Silopi could be the destination for supplies either from Incirlik or key Turkish ports, most notably Mersin and Iskenderun.¹⁰

Kurdish Population. The Kurds were not a homogeneous group. The fact that they were comprised of vastly different factions created a sense of urgency linked as much to their inherent instability as to the critical magnitude of their suffering.

The Kurdish dissidents were split into three major groups, the KDP (Kurdish Democratic Party), PUK (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan), and PKK (Kurdish Workers Party). The PKK was a violent Marxist group which favored an independent Turkish Kurdistan, employed terrorist attacks against the Turks, and may have collaborated with a Turkish anti-American organization, Dev Sol. The CTF opted not to contact the PKK or Dev Sol during humanitarian planning, but was perpetually forced to contend with the threat to security which they posed.¹¹ Violent dissident tactics were a prime reason for the large numbers of mines and booby traps confronting Provide Comfort forces.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ U.S. EUCOM, p. 3.

The CTF recognized and actively interfaced with the remaining two Kurdish factions. The KDP was the largest in the border area. Represented by the most influential Kurdish leader, Masoud Barzani, the KDP included a 30,000-man military arm, the Peshmerge.¹² The final Kurdish faction, the PUK, was predominantly influential in cities near the Turkish border and led by Jabal Talabani.¹³

Time. Time was the most significant single planning consideration in every aspect of the humanitarian intervention. The combined effects of harsh weather, mountainous terrain, political instability, and an acute shortage of food and water led to over 1,000 fatalities per day. Princeton Lyman, Director of the Bureau for Refugee Programs, Department of State, described the situation as an "explosion of human need . . . in short, a logistics nightmare," estimating that 20,000 Kurds entered the border area daily.¹⁴ By mid-June, prevailing climatic trends predicted that intense heat and drought would cause the few mountain streams to dry up, creating problems of a new dimension.¹⁵

Conceptual Approach

U.N. Security Council Resolution 688 triggered an

¹² Shalikashvili, p. 8.

¹³ U.S. EUCOM, p. 3.

¹⁴ "Feature: Middle East Policy After the Gulf War," p. 23.

¹⁵ Shalikashvili, p. 10.

immediate humanitarian response by U.S. Armed Forces. The Hon. Les Aspin opened a Defense Policy Panel meeting on September 4, 1991 with the following explanation for the method of U.S. intervention: "the relief operation to assist the Kurds . . . [represented] something only the U.S. military can do: conduct very large-scale relief operations with little or no defense on local facilities."¹⁶ Critical to the U.S. approach to the operation, however, was a determination to involve humanitarian relief agencies in all phases of Provide Comfort. This added expertise and experience to military resources, personnel, and organization.¹⁷ Of equal importance, early cooperation accelerated the pace of the operation and facilitated ultimate civilian supervision for all humanitarian aspects of Provide Comfort.

U.S. European Command considered one additional historical lesson throughout the initiation of Provide Comfort: the "need for political and public legitimacy which coalitions/alliances help create."¹⁸ Britain, France, and Spain responded quickly to encouragement to join the developing humanitarian coalition and, in so doing, motivated additional participation by other nations. EUCOM consciously endeavored to sustain the early momentum of the growing alliance by

¹⁶ Hon. Les Aspin, "Statement," Aspects of Anti-Chaos Aid to the Soviet Union, p. 1.

¹⁷ Shalikashvili, p. 14.

¹⁸ Waldo D. Freeman et al., "The Challenges of Combined Operations," Military Review, November 1992, p. 3.

deliberately phasing press releases announcing ever-widening international involvement.¹⁹ Provide Comfort remained in the headlines.

The early decisions concerning Provide Comfort evolved at a hectic pace; "there was no Warning Order nor input from the supported CINC [Commander-in-Chief] . . . in effect the process was no notice with an Execute Order coming in the of advance notice of a press release."²⁰ Although it was initially hoped that humanitarian objectives could be fulfilled with massive airdrops, it became apparent that the terrain of the Turkish border and degree to which the Kurds were geographically spread out demanded a new conceptual approach. Effective humanitarian assistance would require that the Kurds be drawn from the mountains and into Provide Comfort camps, where they could be reached by land. The camps would have to be in Iraq if the Kurds were to return to their homes, and large scale intervention in Iraq would now become "humanitarian assistance with a security requirement."²¹

In a press conference on April 16, 1991, President Bush defined the escalating U.S. role in Iraq as follows:

I'm announcing a greatly expanded and more ambitious relief effort. The approach is quite simple: If we

¹⁹ James P. McCarthy, "Commanding Joint and Coalition Operations," Naval War College Review, Winter 1993, p. 19. [GEN McCarthy, USAF was Deputy CINC, EUCom during Provide Comfort.]

²⁰ JULLS, Report no. 51235-27595, Use of the Crisis Action System (CAS) for Provide Comfort (USEUCOM: 1991).

²¹ U.S. EUCom, p. 1.

cannot get adequate food, medicine, clothing, and shelter to the Kurds living in the mountains along the Turkish-Iraq border, we must encourage the Kurds to move to areas in northern Iraq where the geography facilitates rather than frustrates such a large scale relief effort.

. . . I have directed the U.S. military to begin immediately to establish several encampments in northern Iraq where relief supplies for these refugees will be made available in large quantities and distributed in an orderly way.²²

He concluded by stating that "Our long term objective remains the same: for Iraqi Kurds and, indeed, for all Iraqi refugees, wherever they are, to return home and to live in peace, free from repression, free to live their lives."²³

LG John M. Shalikashvili, USA (Deputy Commander, U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR)) was assigned to command CTF Provide Comfort on 17 April. In a Congressional briefing on September 4, 1991, he defined his humanitarian objectives as "Immediate: Stop the dying and suffering; stabilize the population. Mid-term: Resettle population at temporary sites; establish sustainable, secure environment. Long-term: Return population to their homes."²⁴ Eight tasks for CTF forces accompanied these objectives:

- * Provide immediate relief and stabilize the population in place.
- * Build a distribution system/infrastructure for continuous logistics support.
- * Establish a Security Zone in Northern Iraq.
- * Construct temporary facilities i.e. Transit centers, way-stations, support centers, etc.

²² "Feature: Middle East Policy After the Gulf War," p. 21.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Shalikashvili, p. 9.

- * Transfer the refugee population to the temporary sites.
- * Transition the humanitarian operation to the international relief organizations.
- * Provide continuous security for all aspects of the operation.
- * Enable the ultimate return of the refugees to their homes.²⁵

Throughout the duration of Provide Comfort, "the key was always to . . . induce the maximum number of refugees to . . . stop briefly at a camp and then go home."²⁶

Task Force Organization

CTF Provide Comfort began as Joint Task Force (JTF) Provide Comfort before widespread international participation evolved in mid-April. The complexity of the Kurdish refugee crisis dictated familiarity with the area of operation for as many key task force members as possible. Numerous officers who had recently returned from Operation Proven Force at Incirlik AB were redirected to assignments in Provide Comfort, including the JTF commander, Major General (MG) James Jamerson, USAF, who had commanded Proven Force and was the Deputy Chief-of-Staff, U.S. Air Forces Europe (USAFE).²⁷ Like Proven Force, Provide Comfort was envisioned to be an extensive air operation, focusing now on air-delivered supplies. It was appropriate to assign a USAF officer as JTF commander, and the

²⁵ U.S. EUCOM, p. 4.

²⁶ Shalikashvili, p. 11.

²⁷ Tim Ripley, "Operation Provide Comfort II: Western Force Protects Kurds," International Defense Review, October 1991, p. 1055.

returning CG (Commanding General) was provided a staff consisting of a "pre-determined EUCOM 'plug' of specified personnel and capabilities," the intent being to later augment this initial cadre with "balanced representation from components/coalition forces" ²⁸

U.S. Army Europe provided a relieving CTF commander, LG Shalikashvili, and a large segment of the accompanying staff when Provide Comfort expanded to become an extensive ground operation.²⁹ MG Jamerson became the CTF Deputy Commander (ultimately to again command Provide Comfort II³⁰), and Brigadier General (BG) Anthony Zinni, USMC (EUCOM Deputy J3) was assigned as Chief-of-Staff. He, too, would eventually command the CTF after MG Jamerson left. Continuity in leadership was a principal goal.

The tasks comprising CTF objectives were divided among five functional component commands, each commanded by a general officer who reported directly to the CTF commander. Two functional component commanders (Air Forces Command (AFFOR), Combined Support Command (CSC)) were assigned conjunctive roles as service component commanders (USAF, USA). The Navy (TF 60; initially USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT) and USMC (TF 61/Amphibious Group 8; TF 62/24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU)) were not represented by component commanders on

²⁸ U.S. EUCOM, p. 12.

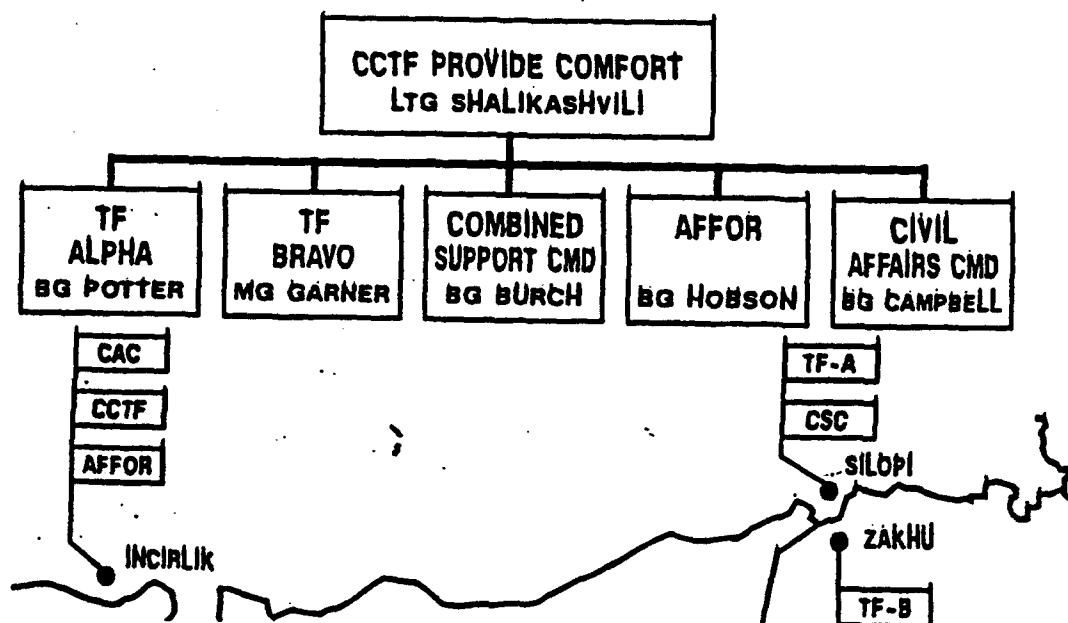
²⁹ Ibid., p. 11.

³⁰ Ripley, p. 1055.

FIGURE 3

PROVIDE COMFORT ORGANIZATION

PROVIDE COMFORT ORGANIZATION



Source: John M. Shalikashvili, "Statement," U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Armed Services, Aspects of Anti-Chaos Aid to the Soviet Union, Hearings (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1991), p. 11.

the CTF staff and were assigned support relationships through the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Naval Forces Europe (CINCUS-NAVEUR).³¹

Of the five functional components commanded by general

³¹ John H. Cushman, "Joint, Jointer, Jointest," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, May 1992, p. 80. [LG Cushman, USA (Ret.) has commanded the Combined Field Army along the DMZ in Korea.]

officers, two were JTFs subordinate to the CTF. JTF A, commanded by BG Dick Potter, USA, consisted extensively of Special Operations Command, Europe (SOCEUR) personnel, many of whom were reassigned to the operation from their standing joint staff.³² JTF A, based in Silopi and comprised of the 10th Special Forces Group in conjunction with British marines, was tasked to care for the Kurds in the mountains, foster Kurdish leadership in the refugee camps, establish transit centers, and draw the Kurds to the relief efforts of the second Joint Task Force, JTF B.³³ JTF B, commanded by MG James Garner, USA (Deputy CG, V Corps), was a USAREUR effort augmented in large measure by the 24th MEU. Based in Zakhu, Iraq beginning on 17 April, JTF B was tasked to establish a 30-kilometer Iraqi security zone (ultimately encompassing 41 towns³⁴) around CTF forces, build/operate transit centers, relocate Kurds to their homes, and plan for the transfer of relief efforts to Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) and international organizations.³⁵

Three additional functional component commands comprised the CTF. Air Forces (AFFOR) Command, commanded at Incirlik AB by BG Hobson, USAF, consisted of a predominantly USAFE staff which coordinated and controlled air delivery/transport opera-

³² U.S. EUCOM, pp. 11-12.

³³ Shalikashvili, pp. 11, 16-17.

³⁴ U.S. EUCOM, p. 3.

³⁵ Shalikashvili, p. 17.

tions and airborne refueling, command and control, and reconnaissance, both in and out of Iraq.³⁶ As the Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC), BG Hobson directed operations of all aircraft except those in the 24th MEU.³⁷ The Combined Support Command (CSC), commanded by BG Burch, USA, was a functional mirror image of the USAREUR 21st Theater Army Area Command, supported by multiple services and nations.³⁸ The command directed all common services, managed the large support network originating at ports of debarkation, negotiated major transportation contracts servicing forward supply facilities, and controlled both the Silopi logistics base and expeditionary airfield in Sirsenk, Iraq.³⁹ The final functional component of the CTF was the Civil Affairs Command (CAC), a single-service, U.S. Army organization. CAC was charged with Provide Comfort coordination with relief agencies and planning for supervisory assistance from the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).⁴⁰ The command was comprised of reserve civil affairs specialists and commanded by BG Campbell, USAR,⁴¹ whose rank generated confidence in long-

³⁶ U.S. EUCOM, p. 2.

³⁷ Cushman, p. 82.

³⁸ U.S. EUCOM, pp. 11-12.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 5.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 6.

⁴¹ Shalikashvili, p. 12.

range CTF plans for civilian-controlled relief efforts.⁴²

One unique Provide Comfort organization warrants final identification. LG Shalikashvili established a forward-based Military Coordination Center (MCC) in Zakhu, Iraq--not a component *per se*, but an additional agency with direct access to the CTF commander. Commanded by COL Dick Nabb, USA and staffed by the U.S. Military Liaison Mission from Potsdam, Germany,⁴³ the MCC provided for "direct face-to-face communications between liaison officers of military forces/agencies engaged in humanitarian relief operations and liaison officers of Iraqi military forces."⁴⁴ The center prevented conflicts, supervised dangerous situations, and diplomatically resolved misunderstandings. Throughout Provide Comfort, the MCC was "the visible symbol among the Kurds, among the Iraqis."⁴⁵

Historical Summary

The initial reaction to the Kurdish humanitarian crisis was confined to Turkish relief efforts. Secretary Baker's visit with the Turkish Foreign Minister confirmed U.S. intentions to intervene,⁴⁶ and airdrops commenced 7 April. By 15

⁴² U.S. EUCOM, p. 13.

⁴³ Emory R. Helton, "Humanitarian Assistance--A Good Way to Lead the World," Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI: 1993, p. 15. [During Provide Comfort, MAJ Helton deployed to JTF A with a Special Forces unit.]

⁴⁴ Shalikashvili, p. 19.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ U.S. EUCOM, p. 2.

April, the initial structure for JTF Provide Comfort headquarters, JTF A, AFFOR, and a USN/USMC liaison cell was in place (Appendix I).⁴⁷ The 24th MEU arrived in Turkey on 15 April with 16 helos to assist JTFs A/B.⁴⁸ The magnitude of the operation had already grown to "more than 40 C-130s, close to 60 helicopters, 75-100 small tactical vehicles, a civil affairs battalion, two medical holding companies, a Seabees construction battalion, and massive amounts of food, tents, blankets, and medical supplies."⁴⁹

Multi-national forces arrived in large numbers beginning 13-14 April as the task force mission became increasingly complex. As the JTF became a CTF, LG Shalikashvili took charge. Immediately following his 18 April visit with Iraqi General Nashwan in northern Iraq,⁵⁰ JTF B and the MCC emerged as Provide Comfort organizations and construction on the first transit camp began.⁵¹ A 24 April demarche implemented at the MCC banned the Iraqi army from the vicinity of Zakhu, limited the Zakhu police force to 50 men, and initiated coalition

⁴⁷ Donald G. Goff, "Building Coalitions for Humanitarian Operations--OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT," Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA: 1992, p. 12. [COL Goff, USA was the J3, JTF B during Provide Comfort.]

⁴⁸ Cushman, p. 81.

⁴⁹ "Feature: Middle East Policy After the Gulf War," p. 24.

⁵⁰ Shalikashvili, p. 20 states "It was not a negotiating session; it was to inform them and to expect compliance from them."

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 20-21.

patrols within a 30-kilometer security zone.⁵² With the Combined Support Command, Civil Affairs Command, and first transit center (Zakhu) in operation by 1 May, Provide Comfort had transformed within three weeks to become "a mix of missions . . . conducted concurrently: . . . deterrence, peacemaking, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and conflict."⁵³

Sirsenk airfield in Iraq was opened to forward-deployed C-130s by mid-May.⁵⁴ An assessment of the Kurdish refugees indicated that many had moved northward and over 150,000 had originated in Dihok (south of Zakhu); the security zone was accordingly expanded to include the homes of the latter.⁵⁵ A mass exodus from the mountains ensued. Initial plans for 12 transit centers, each capable of accommodating 20,000 refugees, were shelved because 10 U.S. camps were no longer necessary. Of four transit centers on which JTF B had initiated construction, two were actually opened.⁵⁶ A snapshot at the two-month mid-June anniversary of the CTF

⁵² James L. Jones, "Operation PROVIDE COMFORT: Humanitarian and Security Assistance in Northern Iraq," Marine Corps Gazette, November 1991, p. 101. [COL (now BG) Jones was CO of the 24th MEU (SOC) during Provide Comfort.]

⁵³ John R. Galvin, "Building on Success: Allied Command Europe Looks to the Future," The RUSI Journal, August 1992, p. 3. [GEN Galvin, USA (Ret.) served as Commander-in-Chief, EUCOM during Provide Comfort.]

⁵⁴ Jones, p. 104.

⁵⁵ Shalikashvili, pp. 18, 21.

⁵⁶ U.S. EUCOM, p. 6.

indicated that all Kurdish border camps were closed, relief operations were fully supervised by the UNHCR, and CAC/JTF A had been deactivated. Ongoing operations had proceeded to evolve from combined forces security/monitoring to air-enforced security in northern Iraq.⁵⁷

Most Provide Comfort objectives had been fulfilled by late June. Withdrawal of active CTF forces was postponed until July, however, in response to British and French concerns that there might be a new Kurdish exodus.⁵⁸ A second demarche in mid-July banned northern Iraqi flights, announced coalition flight operations north of the 36th parallel, extended the role of the MCC in the security zone, and established CTF residual components at Batman airfield and in Silopi to facilitate reactionary enforcement.⁵⁹ As JTF B began to depart Iraq and CSC deactivated, MG Jamerson assumed command of a much smaller task force involving air operations from four U.S. services and nine coalition nations.⁶⁰ Provide Comfort had been credited with deliveries of 17,000 tons of relief supplies⁶¹--peaking at 1,000 tons in a single day--by the combined efforts of 12,300 U.S. and 10,900 coalition

⁵⁷ Shalikashvili, pp. 20-22.

⁵⁸ Ripley, p. 1055.

⁵⁹ Jones, p. 107.

⁶⁰ U.S. EUCOM, p. 8.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 1.

personnel (Appendices II, III).⁶²

Only 1,300 refugees remained in U.S. camps by September 1991.⁶³ Provide Comfort II--a force of 5,000 personnel from six coalition nations, 70 helos, 26 Incirlik-based aircraft, and a carrier air wing--remained in effect "to ensure continued success of the humanitarian aid to the Kurdish and other Iraqi refugees."⁶⁴ The residual humanitarian presence was comprised of both ground and air contingents from the United States, Britain, France, Italy, Turkey, and the Netherlands, augmented by a Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) for combat search-and-rescue (CSAR) operations.⁶⁵

⁶² Shalikashvili, pp. 12, 20-21.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 18.

⁶⁴ Ripley, pp. 1055-56. [Quoted from Pete Williams, Pentagon spokesman.]

⁶⁵ Ibid.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS

Methodology. The focus now shifts to an analysis of the command structure and command relationships of Combined Task Force Provide Comfort. The analysis compares specific aspects of the command to corresponding "doctrine". The term "doctrine" here is used loosely, for much of what is written in "doctrinal" Joint Pubs and Field Manuals applies principles of JTFs to CTFs or extends lessons learned from alliances to coalitions. This is occasionally appropriate, but where published principles fail to adequately address a dimension of combined leadership, the words of leaders with experience in coalition operations can be referenced to overcome shortfalls in doctrinal standards for analysis. This methodology is employed below. The distinction between those with historical coalition experience and the authors of published doctrine is clear throughout the analysis, and their combined thoughts create an interesting perspective from which to evaluate Provide Comfort.

Detailed Study--Command Structure/Command Relationships

Specific Facts. The United States commanded Provide Comfort from the first moment EUCOM established a JTF. Key billets in every component command were assigned to U.S. officers. As Provide Comfort I evolved to Provide Comfort II, a parallel command structure emerged, demonstrating U.S.

support for host-nation interests and more adequately integrating Turkish units with the CTF. Turkish MG Doralim Uyanik, Turkish Air Force, assumed a role structurally equal to that of MG Jamerson.¹

The CTF was task-organized. Two subordinate JTFs were assigned key tasks. Other functional components were created in the interests of efficiency (CSC, CAC) or host-nation requirements.² Service and national relationships existed predominantly for administrative and support functions. USAF and USA personnel were represented by dual-hatted functional component commanders (AFFOR, CSC), whereas the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps were attached to the CTF in support and reported to no service component commander in the CTF command structure. Medical, engineering, and internal security requirements were neither centralized nor identified with independent components.

Corresponding Doctrine. FM 100-7 (Final Draft, April 1994), FM 100-8 (Draft, November 1993), and FM 101-5 describe various models for command in coalitions and alliances. FM 100-7 and FM 100-8 are in complete agreement with respect to coalitions, discussing two versions of parallel command and one lead nation model for coalition command. Parallel command, described as a typical initial, crisis-oriented

¹ Ripley, p. 1056.

² The requirement for a single air command (AFFOR) was effectively dictated by the Turkish air traffic control system (U.S. EUCOM, p. 10).

arrangement which often evolves to lead nation command, does not apply to this analysis except in the evolution of Provide Comfort II. The sole lead nation coalition model in FM 100-8 depicts all forces subordinate to one coalition partner, creating an advantage in unity of command. This lead nation coalition model, however, portrays a lead nation headquarters in command of both allied component commanders and lead nation component commanders. There is no coalition model depicting a lead nation commander in command of only lead nation subordinate commanders. The model which most closely approximates the latter command structure is titled "Lead Nation Command Structure in Alliance" (Appendix IV).³

FM 101-5 describes three types of combined commands, defined by forces aligned by nationalities, forces arranged by type (with nationalities intertwined), and forces combining both. The publication groups all discussion of combined commands in a chapter which fails to distinguish between coalitions and alliances. The aforementioned "forces arranged by type" are depicted in corresponding FM 101-5 models as land, naval, and air forces. There is no broad description or further analysis of other force missions.⁴

³ U.S. Dept. of the Army, Field Manual 100-8: Combined Army Operations (Washington: 1 November 1993), Revised Final Draft, pp. 2-15 - 2-21. [The command structure model in FM 100-8, p. 2-21 is effectively duplicated on p. 2-24, FM 100-7.]

⁴ U.S. Dept. of the Army, Field Manual 101-5: Staff Organization and Operations (Washington: 1984), pp. 2-13 - 2-16.

MAJ B. Maxwell, USA differentiates between three major models in his discussion of theater command and control in a coalition. His "Unilateral Structure" depicts a primary nation commander, primary nation theater staff, and primary nation service component commanders (Appendix IV).⁵ He concludes that the model applies nicely in a coalition where weak partners depend on a stronger partner or where "the weaker partner may simply be more comfortable with the unilateral lead of the stronger partner."⁶

Command relationships are an equally relevant topic in assessing the structure of Provide Comfort. JCS Pub 0-2 states that "the commander of a JTF exercises OPCON [operational control] over assigned and attached forces."⁷ The proposed draft for FM 100-8 does not adequately discuss a coalition commander's option to exercise TACON (tactical control) over assigned coalition forces.⁸ The publication

⁵ Barry A. Maxwell, "Establishing Theater Command and Control in a Coalition of Nations: Requirements for U.S. Doctrine," Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, KS: 1992, pp. 35-36.

⁶ Ibid., p. 40.

⁷ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, JCS Pub 0-2: Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF) (Washington: 1986), p. 3-27.

⁸ "Operational control", as defined in FM 100-8, includes "the authority to prescribe the chain of command; organize commands and forces; suspend or assign officers; delineate functional responsibilities; and delineate geographic areas of responsibility." (FM 100-8, p. 2-24) In NATO, "operational control" includes "the deployment of units concerned and the retention or delegation of tactical control to those units." (FM 100-8, p. 2-25) "TACON [tactical control] involves only the necessary control of movements and maneuvers to accomplish a

only states that "the senior commanders, at the earliest possible time, must agree on the type of command and control relationships that will govern the operations of the forces."⁹

A final series of references guides an evaluation of the selection of component commands and component commanders. Joint Pub 0-2 states that "the balance of Service forces or command and control capabilities should be the primary factors in selecting the functional component commander."¹⁰ Joint Pub 5-00.2 advises that "The JTF commander may exercise OPCON through . . . [a] single-Service force reporting directly to the CJTF (Commander, Joint Task Force) Under exceptional [italics added] circumstances, CJTF may establish a separate single-Service force."¹¹ In a discussion of the organization of forces, Joint Pub 3-0 advises that it is appropriate that JFCs (Joint Force Commanders) exercise OPCON through Service component commanders when "stability, continuity, economy, ease of long-range planning, and scope of operations dictate organizational integrity of Service components."¹² Van Creveld, finally, in an analysis of the essence

previously assigned mission." (FM 100-8, p. 2-24)
TACON is both a NATO and U.S. joint doctrine term.

⁹ FM 100-8, p. 2-25.

¹⁰ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, JCS Pub 0-2, p. 3-28.

¹¹ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub 5-00.2: Joint Task Force Planning Guidance and Procedures (Washington: 1991), p. II-9.

¹² U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub 3-0: Doctrine for Joint Operations (Washington: 1993), p. II-15.

of command, states that:

. . . if an improvement in performance is sought, . . . it is possible . . . to restructure the organization in such a way as to enable it to operate with a reduced capacity [This will lead] either to a drastic simplification of the organization . . . or else to the division of the task into various parts and to the establishment of forces capable of dealing with each of these parts separately on a semi-independent basis.¹³

Van Creveld favors the latter approach.

Operational Assessment. The CTF Provide Comfort command structure most closely approximates two models--"Lead Nation Command Structure in an Alliance" in FM 100-8 and B. Maxwell's "Unilateral Structure" for theater coalition command and control (Appendix IV). The CTF diverges from each, however, in different respects: (1) It is a coalition structure, deviating in this fundamental aspect from FM 100-8; (2) it is comprised of functional v~~i~~pe service components, differing in this regard from both models; (3) its staff is predominantly a lead nation staff, differing from FM 100-8; and (4) its forces are multi-national forces, conforming only to FM 100-8. There are related references to subordinate functional component commands in several doctrinal publications, but none compare the classic "land, sea, and air" approach to the task force approach employed in Provide Comfort. The subordinate JTFs discussed in Joint Pubs refer to combinations of the four services and only allude in a cursory sense to the formation of a JTF for a specific task or series of tasks.

¹³ Martin Van Creveld, Command in War (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 269.

The lead nation command structure of CTF Provide Comfort is appropriate in view of the logic described by Maxwell. With even the largest secondary coalition participant providing one-third the number of U.S. forces, a parallel structure is considered unwieldy and unsuited for the time-constrained environment of the humanitarian crisis. As the crisis unfolds and time becomes less critical, the host-nation is afforded parallel representation. This is a sound procedural change which provides a satisfactory long-term solution to an operation on foreign soil.

The "United States in charge" is a situation with which numerically weaker coalition partners are comfortable in the interests of coalition strength and expediency. The massed forces of coalition partners roughly equal the size of U.S. forces and are unproportionately represented on CTF staffs, but no single coalition partner determines that its objectives differ appreciably from the humanitarian goals pursued by the United States in response to U.N. Resolution 688. More importantly, the three-month life span of Provide Comfort I is too short to provide the time to restructure and discourages the inclination to reorganize a task force which is functionally effective.

The CTF command structure is suitably built upon five task-oriented functional components directed by general officers. Single-service orientation is correctly evaluated to be a less efficient means of employing forces. The seni-

ority of the component commanders provides credibility in the eyes of 13 coalition partners, the host-nation of Turkey, and 50 relief agencies which expect to supervise the long-term humanitarian effort. The centralized control and decentralized execution of logistics and civil affairs is efficient and appropriate in that the lead nation infrastructure offers much in the capability to unify the diverse supply and humanitarian elements of the combined task force. The decision to establish two task-oriented JTFs is sound, for the requirements in northern Iraq differ immensely from one another in two geographic areas, but support each other closely in a phased sequence of planned inter-related operations.

Although some argue that medical, engineering, and internal security tasks warrant representation as component commands, they are in no way equal to logistics and civil affairs in significance to the overall operation. They are adequately represented by officers on the CTF staff and operationally efficient at the functional component level. There is also no requirement for an independent USN component. Although a specific USN component could offer more direct control over specialized Naval forces, USN involvement is minimal throughout Provide Comfort.

The U.S. Marine Corps is actively intertwined with U.S. Army land component operations in JTF B. Again, there is no requirement for an independent component. Although the 24th MEU initially supported JTF B with virtually its entire staff,

it has emerged to become a smaller element of JTF B than co-located U.S. Army forces, is thereby assigned a commensurate non-commanding role in JTF B, and is suitably represented, from a functional standpoint, by the U.S. Army JTF B commander. Adequate USMC service component representation exists in the CTF headquarters Navy Liaison Cell (NLC).

A final aspect of this analysis focuses on the advantage the CTF achieves through centralized command of a task force characterized by decentralized command relationships. Every component commander reports directly to LG Shalikashvili. All coalition partners operate under tactical control:

While the Joint Chiefs of Staff and field commanders evidently have uniformly assumed that joint force commanders would have operational control over forces assigned, Lieutenant General Shalikashvili in Provide Comfort never had more than tactical control. Consequently, his abilities for 'authoritative direction' might have suffered. But by all accounts that was not so. Indeed, when queried Major General Garner, Colonel Jones, and others in the chain of command did not know whether they had been OpCon or TaCon to the commander of Task Force Provide Comfort. And it never occurred to them to ask. All they knew was that Shalikashvili had the mission and was in charge, and they were going to do what he told them to do.¹⁴

TACON fulfills two major objectives: (1) It enables the CTF commander to execute the Provide Comfort mission with no loss of effectiveness, and (2) it provides individual coalition partners ultimate authoritative control over their forces. In conjunction with TACON, decentralization facilitates the swift pace which drives CTF Provide Comfort I to its three-month

¹⁴ Cushman, p. 83.

conclusion.

Summary of Findings. Combined Task Force Provide Comfort demonstrates five findings: (1) the feasibility of lead nation command in a coalition; (2) the advantages of centralized command; (3) the force-multiplying effects of decentralized execution; (4) the viability of task-oriented functional component commands; and (5) the significance of "tactical control" in coalition relationships. The additive strengths of these findings are demonstrated in the success of CTF Provide Comfort and should be reflected in a doctrinal model for coalition operations.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The lessons of Combined Task Force Provide Comfort are significant in view of the current international arena. Reduced force structures foretell the ever-increasing relevance of multi-national and multi-agency operations. In modern conflicts, the contributions of allies play a continually expanding role as nations seek international legitimacy as a prerequisite for intervention across national lines. Although no two combined operations and no two coalitions will be alike, the successful results of operations like Provide Comfort are worthy of analysis in an environment where "the primary source of difficulty is the lack of precedent and an absence of combined doctrine."¹

Combined Task Force Provide Comfort was driven to extraordinary heights of achievement by the underlying crisis which led to the humanitarian intervention. The impending arrival of heat and drought in a region where over one thousand Kurds were dying daily left little time for in-depth analysis and no room for error. The situation inspired one nation to take charge in anticipation that others, encouraged by United States and host-nation unity, would fall into line.

¹ National Defense University, Armed Forces Staff College, AFSC Pub 1: The Joint Staff Officer's Guide 1993 (Washington: 1993), p. 2-43.

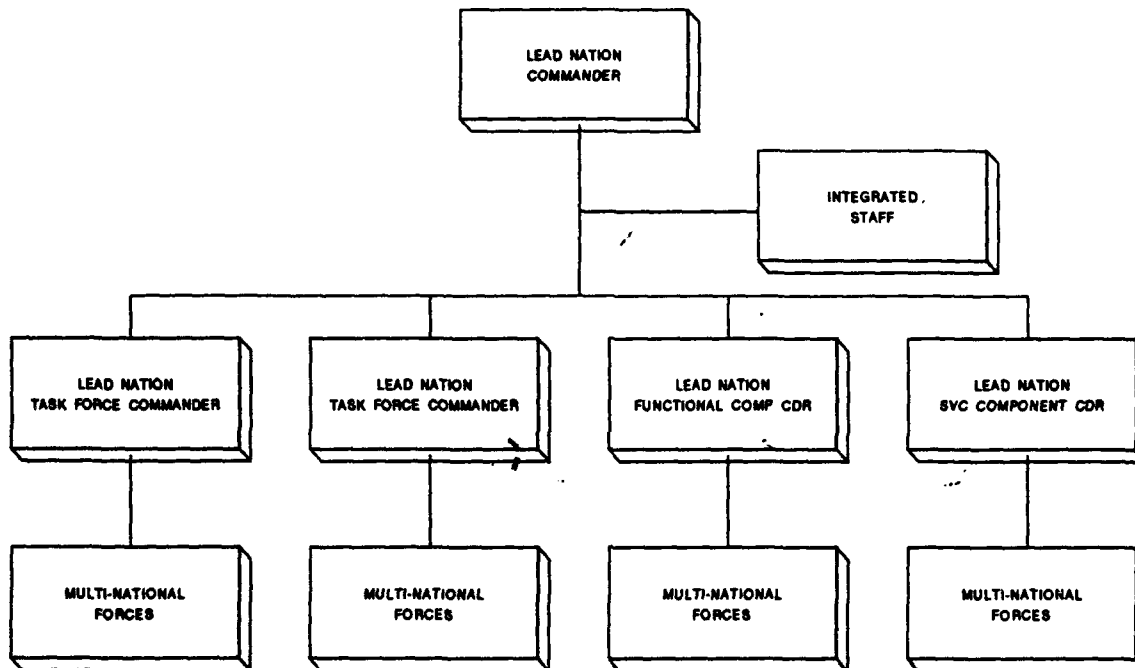
A new lead nation task force emerged. The overarching concern for time led to consolidation in burdensome procedures and a unique application of "tactical control". The Provide Comfort task force demonstrated that combined operations may necessitate variations in doctrinal guidance. Most importantly from the perspective of lessons learned, Lieutenant General Shalikashvili widened his focus, analyzed the key aspects of the operation, and melted service and national boundaries to create a task-oriented force. In spite of his success, his centralized command structure, functionally-based component commands, and decentralizing employment of mission-type orders are inadequately portrayed in doctrinal models for combined operations. With final drafts for Field Manual 100-7 (Decisive Force: The Army in Theater Operations) and Field Manual 100-8 (Combined Army Operations) now in distribution, the time is ripe for a new lead nation model for coalition operations.

Recommendations

The "Lead Nation Command Structure in Alliance" model in FM 100-7 and FM 100-8 can be expanded to display task-oriented components. The evolutionary model, as in Maxwell's "Unilateral Structure", can display components immediately subordinate to a lead nation commander. The new model will not specify "operational" or "tactical control" between elements. It will be suited for publication in a Joint Pub, most likely

FIGURE 4

PROPOSED MODEL: LEAD NATION COMMAND STRUCTURE, COALITION
INTEGRATED STAFF
TF/FUNCTIONAL/SVC COMPONENT COMMANDERS
MULTI-NATIONAL FORCES



OPCON OR TACON COMMAND AND CONTROL

Joint Pub 3-0: Doctrine for Joint Operations (Chapter VI, "Multinational Operations").

The new lead nation model will not contradict existing doctrine. It will apply selected discussions of alliances to coalitions and some procedures identified with Joint Task Force structures to the organization of a Combined Task Force.

APPENDIX I

FIGURE 5

PROVIDE COMFORT CHRONOLOGY

- 5 April--Alert/order to deploy.
- 6 April--Forces commence deployment.
- 7 April--First airdrops - 27 tons.
- 9-11 April--Mission expanded to sustain entire DC population for 30+ days and provide for temporary resettlement.
- 15 April--HSSB Silopi begins operations with arrival of Marine expeditionary unit (24 MEU).
- 17 April--Lieutenant General Shalikashvili assumes command.
- 18 April--TF B established near Zakhu, commander meets with IZ military, and Diyarbakir begins operations.
- 20 April--Construction begins on first transit center camp near Zakhu.
- 22 April--MCC established for deconfliction.
- 23 April--Largest single day relief - 969 tons; first casualty - land mine explosion.
- 24 April--First truck delivery of supplies to DC camps.
- 27 April--First transit center opened (Zakhu).
- 28 April--Fixed wing airdrops significantly reduced.
- 30 April--Combined support command established at Silopi.
- 2-5 May--Security expansion eastward to Al Amadiyah/Suri.
- 11 May--TF A begins movement of DC's to Zakhu, second transit center opened.
- 13 May--First transit center turned over to U.N. control.
- 15 May--First fixed wing flight into Sirsenk Airfield.
- 21 May--CTF peak personnel strength - 21,701.
- 25 May--81 allied support troops enter Dihok.
- 29 May--Deployment of all coalition forces complete.
- 6 Jun--Last border camp closed.
- 7 Jun--All relief operations transferred to UNHCR.
- 8 Jun--TF-A deactivated; phased redeployment begins.
- 12 Jun--Civil affairs command deactivated.
- 15 Jun--Support troops depart Dihok.
- 22 Jun--Redeployment from Iraq paused.
- 15 Jul--Activated infantry battalion task force; TF-B departed northern Iraq.
- 17 Jul--Combined support command deactivated.

Source: John M. Shalikashvili, "Statement," U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Armed Services, Aspects of Anti-Chaos Aid to the Soviet Union, Hearings (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1991), pp. 20-22.

APPENDIX II

U.S. MILITARY PARTICIPATION

**FIGURE 6: U.S. MILITARY PARTICIPATION--BY SERVICE
PROVIDE COMFORT**

U.S. Military Participation

USA.....	6,119
USAF.....	3,588
USMC.....	1,875
USN.....	734
Total ¹	12,316

¹ Total does not include the carrier group or military based in Turkey supporting operation.

Source: John M. Shalikashvili, "Statement," U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Armed Services, Aspects of Anti-Chaos Aid to the Soviet Union, Hearings (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1991), p. 12.

FIGURE 7: U.S. MILITARY PARTICIPATION--WITHIN COMPONENTS

U.S. Army

10th Special Forces Group
3/325 Airborne Infantry Battalion
4th (aviation) Brigade, 8th Inf Div
(Mech) and assorted Army aviation
units from other commands
18th Engineer Brigade
18th Military Police Brigade
Various signal units
Medical units of all kinds
Logistic support units, all kinds, of
21st Theater Army Area Command
Psychops units
354th Civil Affairs Brigade

U.S. Navy

Naval Mobile Const Bn 113
SEAL platoon
Medical units
Amphibious ready group in support
Carrier battle group in support

U.S. Marine Corps

24th MEU (SOC)
BLT 2/8 (Reinf)
HMM-264
MSSG-24
ANGLICO teams
Logistic support task force

U.S. Air Force

Composite wing consisting of four tac
fighter wings, an AWACS contin-
gent, air refuelers, electronic warfare
and recce elements
Airlift force consisting of several
C-130 squadrons and a C-12/C-21
contingent
Hospital and airevac units
Civil Engineering units
Base support units

UK: Brigade, Royal Marines; RAF C-130 and heli-lift units Spain: Para-expeditionary force
France: Battalion, paramarines; air- and heli-lift units Netherlands: Marine battalion; medical units
Italy: The Fologre Brigade; special forces; air- and heli-lift units Belgium: Airlift contingent
Australia, Luxembourg, Canada: Air- and heli-lift contingents Germany: Heli-lift contingent

Source: John H. Cushman, "Joint, Jointer, Jointest,"
U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, May 1992, p. 80.

APPENDIX III

COALITION PARTICIPATION

FIGURE 8

Coalition Partners Participation

Australians	75
Belgians	150
Canadians	120
French	2,141
Germans	221
Italians	1,183
Luxembourg.....	43
Netherlands.....	1,020
Portugal.....	19
Spanish	602
Turkey	1,160
United Kingdom	4,192
Total	10,926

FIGURE 9

PROVIDE COMFORT

(Coalition Forces)

Country	Personnel	Unit Type
Australia	75	Admin, Medical, Engr.
Belgium	155	Comm, Medical, Logistic.
Canada	120	Aircraft, Medical, Logistic.
France	2,141	Aircraft, Helo, Abn, Engr, Signal, EOD, Medical, Logistic.
Germany	221	Aircraft, Helo.
Italy	1,183	Aircraft, Helo, Medical, Abn, Engr, SF, MP, Logistic, Signal.
Luxembourg.....	43	Inf, Logistic, Medical.
Netherlands.....	1,020	Helos, Medical, Amphib CBT GP, Engr.
Portugal.....	19	Aircraft, Logistic.
Spain	602	Helos, Abn, Engr, Signal, Medical.
Turkey	1,160	Aircraft, Helo, Security, Medical, Base Facilities, Inf Bn.
United Kingdom.....	4,192	Aircraft, Helo, CDO BDE, Engr, Logistic, Medical, EOD.
United States.....	18,285	Aircraft, Helo, SF, Signal, Engr, MP, CA, MEU, ABCT, Carrier Task Force 60.

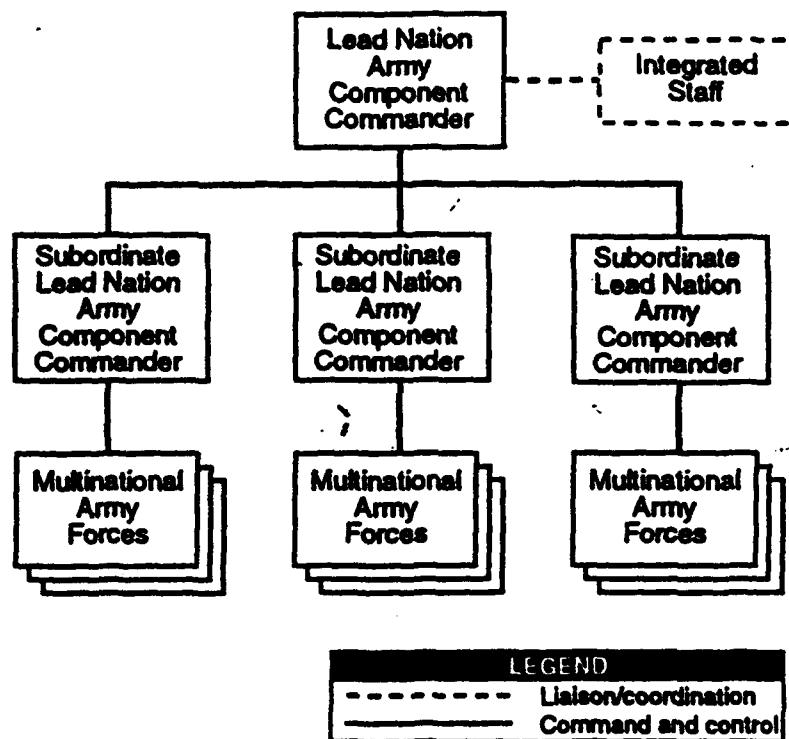
Source (both Figures): John M. Shalikashvili, "Statement," U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Armed Services, Aspects of Anti-Chaos Aid to the Soviet Union, Hearings (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1991), pp. 12-13.

APPENDIX IV

PUBLISHED MODELS (COMBINED COMMAND)

FIGURE 10

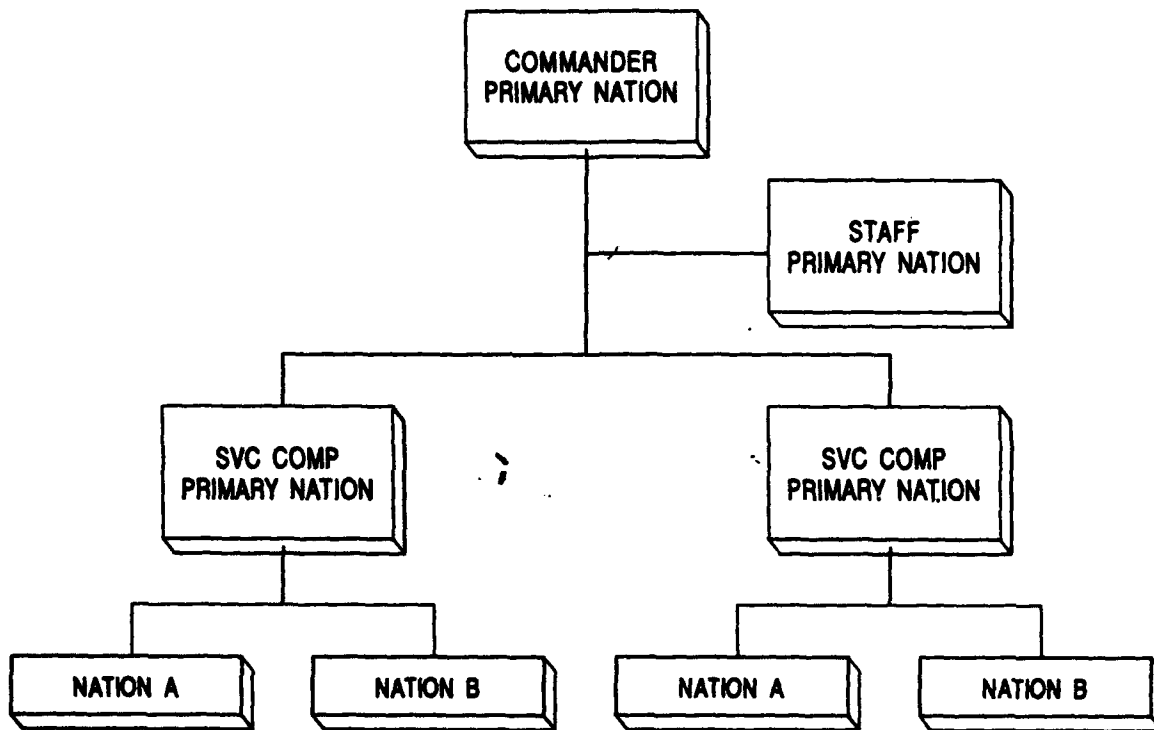
LEAD NATION COMMAND STRUCTURE IN ALLIANCE (INTEGRATED STAFF AND MULTINATIONAL SUBORDINATE FORMATIONS)



Source: U.S. Dept. of the Army, Field Manual 100-7: Decisive Force: The Army in Theater Operations (Washington: 4 April 1994), Final Draft, p. 2-24. [This Figure is effectively duplicated in FM 100-8: Combined Army Operations (Washington: 1 November 1993), Draft, p. 2-21.]

FIGURE 11

THEATER COALITION C2 STRUCTURES:
UNILATERAL STRUCTURE



Source: Barry A. Maxwell, "Establishing Theater Command and Control in a Coalition of Nations: Requirements for U.S. Doctrine," Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, KS: 1992.

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